

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11645

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, FR, VN

SUBJECT: EVACUATION FLIGHTS FROM SAIGON: MONTH OF MAY

REF: BANGKOK 11538

SUMMARY: A PASSENGER FROM SAIGON RELAYED INFORMATION ABOUT THE BROWN FAMILY, PERSONS REMAINING IN RE-EDUCATION IS A COMMON LAMENT AND CAMBODIANS DESCRIBE THEIR LIVES IN SAIGON. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MONTH OF MAY, FOUR FRENCH EVACUATION FLIGHTS FROM SAIGON CARRIED A TOTAL OF 509 PERSONS, OR AVERAGE OF 127 PASSENGERS PER FLIGHTS. COMPOSITION BY NATIONALITY AS FOLLOWS: 260 FRENCH, 176 VIETNAMESE, 1 INDIAN, 5 GREEK, 18 CHINESE, 26 CAMBODIANS, 5 FILIPINOS, 1 SWISS, 3 JAPANESE, AND 14 KOREANS.

2. ALTHOUGH AIR FRANCE HAD EARLIER BEEN ADVISED THAT AMCIT TETESA REED WOULD BE ON BOARD MAY 26 FLIGHT, BANGKOK OFFICE RECEIVED ANOTHER TELEX PRIOR TO PLANE'S ARRIVAL INFORMING IT THAT HER DEPARTURE HAS BEEN POSTPONED.

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3. FRIEND OF MRS. DANG THI TUAN PHUONG BROWN, WIFE OF DECEASED USAID EMPLOYEE CHARLES BROWN, AND MOTHER OF AMCIT RICHARD BENNY BROWN, BROUGHT OUT PLEA FROM MRS. BROWN ON MAY 26 FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN HELPING HER AND HER SON TO DEPART VIET-NAM. RICHARD BENNY HAS RETAINED HIS AMERICAN PASSPORT AND THEY BOTH HAVE NOW RECEIVED LAISSEZ-PASSERS

WHICH FRENCH HAVE ISSUED AT OUR REQUEST. MRS. BROWN FORMALLY APPLIED TO SAIGON IMMIGRATION ONLY IN APRIL 1977. FOR PERMISSION TO DEPART. THE FRIEND SAID THAT THE BROWNS ARE LIVING IN POVERTY.

4. OTHERS ON THE SAME FLIGHT SPOKE OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONS STILL IN RE-EDUCATION. A WOMAN WITH CHILDREN LEFT VIET-NAM AFTER WAITING FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS FOR HER HUSBAND--A FORMER ARVN CAPTAIN WHO NEITHER WORKED IN A SENSITIVE AREA NOR WAS A COMBATANT--TO RE-EMERGE FROM RE-EDUCATION; THE CASE WAS IDENTICAL FOR ANOTHER WIFE AND CHILDREN: THE HUSBAND WAS AN ARVN MAJOR WHO WORKED AS A PHARMACIST. IN NEITHER CASE HAVE THEY EVEN RECEIVED WORD THAT THEIR HUSBANDS ARE ALIVE SINCE THEY ENTERED RE-EDUCATION. A FORMER AIR FORCE SERGEANT WHO HAD TO ATTEND ONLY A WEEK'S RE-EDUCATION AND HAS TWICE IGNORED THE AUTHORITIES' REQUEST THAT HE RETURN TO HIS FORMER WORK OF AIRBORNE ELECTRONICS, GUESSED PERHAPS CONSERVATIVELY THAT ONLY ONE IN TEN PERSONS WHO ENTERED LONG-TERM RE-EDUCATION HAVE RE-EMERGED. THE SUBJECT IS ONE ON THE TONGUES OF EVERYONE WITH WHOM ONE SPEAKS TRAVELLING ON THESE FLIGHTS.

5. THE LOCAL ELECTIONS FOR CITY AND PRECINCT PEOPLE'S COUNCIL MEMBERS PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY IN SAIGON ON MAY 15, ACCORDING TO PASSENGERS QUERIED. ONE WOMAN NOTED THAT THERE WAS FREE CHOICE AMONG THE CANDIDATES IN THE BALLOTING, BUT ANOTHER ARGUED VEHEMENTLY THAT THE CHOICES HAD BEEN MADE BEFOREHAND AND THAT THE PEOPLE WERE ONLY GOING THROUGH

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THE MOTIONS ON ELECTION DAY.

6. ON BOARD THE MAY 26 FLIGHT BOUND FOR FRANCE WERE ALSO APPROXIMATELY TEN SINO-CAMBODIANS, VARIOUSLY LISTED AS CHINESE, CAMBODIAN, OR VIETNAMESE. THEY SAID THEY HAD BEEN WAITING TO LEAVE VIET-NAM FOR TWO YEARS SINCE THEY ENTERED IT FROM CAMBODIA. GROUP REPORTED THAT A CAMBODIAN CAN SURVIVE IN ONLY ONE OF TWO WAYS IN SAIGON, EITHER BY STAYING WITH ANY RELATIVES THERE THAT ONE MIGHT HAVE OR BY LIVING OFF MONEY SENT IN FROM ABROAD, WHICH WAS THEIR CASE. CAMBODIANS WITHOUT SUCH MEANS OF SUPPORT ARE ENCOURAGED TO GO TO LIVE IN THE NEW ECONOMIC AREAS. ALL RIDICULED THE REPORT THAT THE SRV GIVES EACH CAMBODIAN SIX KGS OF RICE MONTHLY (REFTEL), SAYING THEY HAD NEVER HEARD OF ANY HAND-OUTS OF THIS KIND FOR CAMBODIANS. THEY WERE FULL OF RUMORS OF CAMBODIAN-VIETNAMESE CONFLICTS IN THE PARROT'S BEAK AREA AND FARTHER SOUTH, NOTING THAT VIETNAMESE HAVE DUG TRENCHES IN A NUMBER OF PLACES ALONG THE BORDER. THEY ALSO PASSED ON RUMORS OF RECENT, CONSIDERABLE VIETNAMESE

RESISTANCE ACTIVITY IN CHAU DOC.
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY ANALYSIS: DISSEMINATION CO-ORDINATED WITH S/S-O.

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